THE NATURE OF PATRONAGE, AND THE Duty of PATRONS, &c.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

NATURE

OF

PATRONAGE,

AND THE

Duty of PATRONS,

Conſider'd in three Letters publiſhed in the WEEKLY MISCELLANY; with ſome *Additions*; and a *fourth* Letter on the ſame Subject, which the Author of that Paper did not think fit to inſert.

By GENEROSUS.

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M DCC XXXV.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND

The Lord Biſhop of LONDON.

My LORD,

HAVING been inform'd, by a particular Friend, that your Lordſhip expreſs'd a Deſire that ſomebody wou d write a Diſcourſe upon PATRONAGE, and an Intimation that my Lords, the Biſhops, would encourage it by diſperſing it among the NOBILITY and GENTRY, I have ventur'd to ask your Encouragement of this Piece: The Subject is worthy of your Protection; and, as it would be *Preſumption* in me to imagine I have

DEDICATION.

I have done it Juſtice, I may without *Vanity* hope, I have ſaid many things which deſerve a ſerious Peruſal. That it may have ſome Effect towards removing an Evil which I look upon to be the *great Source* of our *ſpreading Infidelity* and *Irreligion*, is the hearty Prayer of,

My LORD,

Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient Servant,

GENEROSUS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE PREFACE.

AS *the following Papers contain ſome Things of an extraordinary Nature, it will be ask'd, perhaps,* what *and* who *the Author is? Such Queſtions muſt be allow'd to be of great Importance; but I happen not to be inclin'd to anſwer them. However, I will oblige the Inquiſitive ſo far as to let them know my* Deſign *in publiſhing; becauſe a* diſintereſted *Author is uſually read with a particular Attention and Regard: and, as deceitful as our Hearts are, I am* certainly aſſur'd *that I could have no Intention to better my own* Circumſtances, *but the* World. *For tho', I bleſs God, I am at preſent in a good State of Health, and likely to continue ſo, yet when I determin'd to republiſh, with ſome Additions, the Letters in this Form, and carried them to the Preſs, I apprehended myſelf to be in a declining State, and that I ſhould in a little time be out of the reach of any Benefit that might be expected to ariſe to me, in this World, from the Publication of them: This Circumſtance, as it gives the Writer no little Pleaſure, ſo it ought to give him ſome Credit with the Reader.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

LETTER I.

IN a former Paper you barely touched upon a Subject that deſerves a particular Conſideration. It is the primary Intention of your *Miſcellany* to promote the Intereſt of RELIGION and *Learning*; and if you would do it to any conſiderable Purpoſe, you muſt endeavour to perſuade thoſe who have it in their Power to diſtinguiſh Men by Rewards and Preferments, who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their Abilities and Services. From the Nature of Things it ever will be, it ever muſt be, that RELIGION and LEARNING will flouriſh in Proportion to the Encouragement which is given to *learned* and *good* Men; not only becauſe proper Rewards are neceſſary Motives to excite Mankind to acquire *Merit*, but becauſe proper Stations are requiſite for the Exerciſe of their ſeveral *Capacities*. This is a Matter of great Importance to the PUBLICK in reſpect to *civil* Promotions, but of much greater as to *Eccleſiaſtical* ones, and falls more properly within your Province. The ſcandalous Abuſe of PATRONAGE in the CHURCH is a publick Grievance that every one muſt obſerve, that all ſerious Perſons lament, that very few ſo much as attempt to redreſs. Even ſome, who in all other Reſpects are truly valuable and exemplary, are acceſſary to it; by which Means the Abuſe gradually grows greater, and receives a Sanction from Cuſtom and Authority. I ſhall therefore preſume, in the decenteſt Manner I can, to offer my Thoughts upon this Subject, and endeavour to ſhew, that PATRONAGE is a TRUST; that PATRONS are obliged to diſpoſe of their Preferments, with a regard to the great *Ends* for which they were intended, and not at liberty to ſerve *private* Views, to promote the Intereſt of a *Party*, to gratify the Inclination or Humour of the *Patron*.

I did intend, by way of *Introduction*, to have given ſome Account of the *Original*, and *gradual Alteration* of Patronage *; but I have not room, neither is it neceſſary; for, if PATRONAGE be, as it moſt undoubtedly is, a TRUST, whatever Changes it has ſuffered in the *Execution*, it muſt ſtill continue the ſame in its *Nature*. Shift it out of one Hand into another ten thouſand times, a TRUST it muſt ſtill remain, attended with an *indiſpenſable* Obligation to ſatisfy the *equitable* Claims of the *Clergy*, to provide for the *Spiritual* Intereſt of the *People*, to conſult the Honour of GOD.

Firſt, Let us conſider how the Caſe ſtands in Point of *Juſtice* or *Equity*, in reſpect of the *Demands* of thoſe who are to be *preſented* by Patrons; for, if their be an *equitable Claim* on the one Side, there muſt be an *Obligation* on the other to anſwer it. To talk of any Man's having a *Right*, when he has no *expreſs Law* upon which to ground his Right, will be reckon'd ſtrange Language; and the Reaſon is, becauſe few People extend their Notions of *Right* and *Wrong* beyond the Limits of *Weſtminſter-Hall*; not conſidering, that all *human* Laws are ſuppoſed to be founded upon ſome *antecedent* Law, to which all Men are ſubject. *Human* Laws are ſuppoſed to enact nothing but what was *juſt* and *equitable* before it was enacted by the Authority of the Legiſlature; and if it was not reaſonable before, it cannot become reaſonable afterwards, tho' the Nature of Society may require Subjection to Laws injurious to the *natural Rights* of private Perſons. Inſtead therefore of a *Right*, to which common Uſage has annex'd the Notion of ſome *poſitive* Appointment, we will inſert *Reaſon*; and then the Enquiry will be, whether it be not *fit* and *reaſonable* that every Clergyman, who has devoted himſelf to the Service of the Community, and diſqualified himſelf for any other Employment, ſhould be provided for in that Way, proportionably to his Ability and Induſtry in it. *Religion* being the common Concern of the Society, it is abſolutely neceſſary

* *See two excellent Charges to the Clergy, by our preſent learned Metropolitan, when Biſhop of* Lincoln.

that

that there ſhould be a certain Number of Perſons ſelected, who are to employ their Time, firſt in qualifying themſelves for the Office of the *Prieſthood*, and afterwards to devote themſelves wholly to the Diſcharge of that Function. This being the Caſe, can it be made a Queſtion, whether Perſons, ſo devoting themſelves to the Service of the Community, and ſo employing themſelves in it, ought not, in *Reaſon*, to be ſupported and advanced in their *Function*, according to the Service which they actually have *done*, or have qualified themſelves *for* doing? Whoever will deny this, is not capable of being *reaſoned* with, becauſe he denies the *fundamental Principles* of *Reaſon*, and the *immutable Fitneſs* of *Things*. This is *the very* Caſe of the *Clergy*. It is requiſite, from the *Nature* of *Religion*, that a certain Number of the Society ſhould be educated for the Service of it in the Buſineſs of Religious Offices; that they ſhould, when ſo qualified, give themſelves up to the Adminiſtration of thoſe Offices: Accordingly ſuch a Number are ſo educated, ſo employed, and ſo devoted; and by ſuch Dedication of themſelves made incapable of any other Office in the Society, or of any other Way of Livelihood. Will any one now ſay that theſe Perſons have not a *reaſonable* Claim to a *Maintenance* ſuitable to the Profeſſion to which, for the Good of the PUBLICK, they have *appropriated* themſelves, and to a *Reward* anſwerable to the Services they have done to the *Society* in the Diſcharge of it? If not, then it will follow that the *Society* have a *Right* to the Labours of ſo many Members of it, without being obliged to make them any Return; *i. e.* that a Number of Men, without any proper *Conſideration*, are to devote themſelves to *Beggary*, or *Poverty*. If there be ſuch a Thing as *Reaſon* and *Fitneſs*, the Demands of theſe Perſons are *reaſonable* and *equitable* in the *Nature of Things*: No Propoſition in *Mathematicks* can be clearer.

But, *Secondly*, they have a farther Claim upon the *Society*, in Virtue of the *poſitive Appointment* of the *Law of the Land*. The LEGISLATURE has appropriated ſuch a Share of the *publick Revenue* to the Uſes of *Religion*, the *Maintenance* and *Reward* of ſuch as offici-

ate in them. This is a *publick Invitation* to ſuch a Number of Perſons to enter into *Holy Orders*; and ſuch an *Invitation* implies a *Stipulation* or *Contract* between *them* and the *Society*; in Right of which they are, by *Law*, intitled to ſuch a Part of this Revenue, as they ſhall deſerve by their Behaviour in their Office; or, in other Words, as they anſwer the *Ends* for which the Society may *reaſonably be ſuppoſed* to have appointed the Revenue. What then may we reaſonably ſuppoſe thoſe *Ends* to be, for which the Society appointed ſuch a Revenue? The *private* Advantage of the Perſon who has the *Nomination* to the Living, or the Benefit of the *People* for whoſe Happineſs the Clergy are appointed, and the better promoting the Intereſt of *Religion*, and the Glory of *God?* Surely not the *former*, but the *latter*. Thoſe Clergymen therefore who have beſt anſwered, or are beſt qualified to anſwer thoſe *publick Ends*, have a Title, by the *Intention* of the *Legiſlature*, to the largeſt Share of that Maintenance and Reward which was appointed for them. This Argument is unanſwerable, unleſs we ſuppoſe, what cannot with any *Appearance* of Truth be ſuppoſed, that the Society intended the Advantage of the *Patron* in the *Endowment* of a Living, without any Regard to the *Clergy*, the *Publick*, or *God*.

Thirdly, This *Obligation* is bound upon *Patrons*, not only by the *unalterable Reaſon* and *Fitneſs* of Things, not only by the *Intention* of the *Legiſlature*, but by the *expreſs Command* of *God* in his *written Word*. To this Purpoſe, I ſhall cite a moſt remarkable Paſſage of St. *Paul*, where he is giving Directions about this particular Affair; and I defy all the *Subtilty* of the *Schoolmen* to elude, or diſtinguiſh away the Force of it. He ſays directly, *That thoſe who have laboured in the Word and Doctrine are worthy* of *double Honour* or *Reward*. This is a plain Rule that was not any ways *peculiar* to the Times of the *Apoſtles*, but will hold *equally* as long as *Chriſtianity* ſhall endure; that thoſe who have taken moſt Pains, and have done moſt Good in propagating it, ought to be proportionably rewarded and diſtinguiſhed in the Church. And by Parity of Reaſon

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the ſame Rule is to be obſerved with regard to Men's Capacities and Qualifications to do Service, as well as to Services already performed. According to this *Apoſtolical* Precept, ſuch as are *moſt* likely to promote *Chriſtianity* and the Salvation of *Chriſtians*, ought, in their Advancement, to *precede* thoſe of lower Abilities and Qualifications. To the ſame Purpoſe tend the ſeveral Directions given by St. *Paul*, concerning the *Fitneſs* of Perſons for *Holy Orders*; all which Directions muſt, in the very Nature of the Thing, equally affect thoſe who are concern'd in *nominating* Clergymen to particular Cures, becauſe the greater Furtherance of the *Goſpel*, and the better Edification of the People, being the Thing aimed at by the *Apoſtle*, and depending upon the *Nomination* as well as *Ordination* of the moſt fit and qualified Perſons, all *Lay-Patrons* are as much bound by thoſe Rules as the *Biſhops* are, unleſs you ſuppoſe ſuch *Patrons* to be no *Chriſtians*.

In theſe three Reſpects then *Patrons* are *Truſtees:* They are Truſtees for the *Clergy*, who *dedicate* themſelves to the Office of the *Prieſthood*; they are Truſtees for the *People*, for whoſe Happineſs *they* were dedicated, and the *Prieſthood* appointed; they are Truſtees for *Religion*, whoſe Intereſt and Honour ought to be promoted, as far as may be, by the Adminiſtrations of the Clergy.

Let us, by way of Illuſtration, change the *Faculty*, and ſubſtitute *Phyſick* in the room of *Divinity*. Suppoſe that *Phyſicians* had their ſeveral *Diſtricts* appointed them, as *Clergymen* have their *Pariſhes*, with *ſettled Salaries* charg'd upon their Patients by Act of Parliament, with other honorary and profitable Places appropriated to the *Profeſſion*. I preſume, in this Caſe it will be granted, that the *Intention* of ſuch Endowments was for the better and more honourable Maintenance of Phyſicians, in order that the Science might be known and practiſed with the greater Succeſs and Advantage to the People. The Deſign of the *Maintenance* and *Reward* cannot be different *from*, much leſs inconſiſtent *with*, the Deſign of the *Faculty itſelf*; which is, the *Health* of Mankind. We will ſuppoſe then that the

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Nomination of Phyſicians to their Diſtricts, and the Power of *conferring Rewards*, to be veſted, as the Gift of *Livings* and *Dignities* are, in different Hands: Would any Man of *common Senſe* and *Honour*, however he might come by this Right of Donation, think himſelf at *Liberty* to *nominate* and *reward* Perſons, without any regard to their *Qualifications*, their *Abilities*, and *Services*; or to the Good of thoſe, for whoſe Health *Phyſick* and *Phyſicians* are intended? Would he not rather think it his Duty to promote Men with regard to their Skill and Diligence, and Honeſty; and reward them according as they have contributed to the Honour and Uſefulneſs of the Faculty, and the Good of Mankind? Or what would the World think of any Man who ſhould proſtitute a *Truſt* of ſuch Conſequence, by appointing an unqualified Perſon to practiſe Phyſick, or by giving him a Place of *Honour* and *Profit*, appointed for the Support and Encouragement of the *Science*, only becauſe he was a *Relation*, or *Favourite*, or in Conſideration of ſome *private* Views? Would not he be condemn'd for miſapplying a *publick* Revenue? Would not he be thought anſwerable for the *Lives* of ſuch as might die under unſkilful Hands? I cannot imagine that the Matter could admit of any Diſpute or Debate. Now, let any Man change Faculties again, and ſuppoſe theſe *Phyſicians* to be *Clergymen*, and I ſhall be ſtrangely ſurpriz'd if the *Patron*'s *Truſt* will not be greater, and his Abuſe of it more criminal, more pernicious, and more diſhonourable, as *Divinity* is more excellent, and of greater Importance than Phyſick, and the *Health* and *eternal Happineſs* of the *Soul* preferable to the Health of the *Body*.

It will ſignify nothing to object, what ſome will be very ready to object, that there is no *particular* Direction either in *Reaſon*, or in the *Law* of the *Land*, or in the Law of God, *what particular* Preferment, or *what particular Share* of Preferment any *one* Clergyman ſhall have: This was not poſſible, neither is it at all neceſſary. The Direction and the Obligation are, and muſt be, *general*; but the Application to *particular* Inſtances, is as eaſy as any *other general Rule*. An honeſt, conſci-

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entious Man will be able, in the main, to do his Duty; and no Man is able to weigh the Merits and Capacities of Clergymen by *Grains* and *Scruples*, let the Scales be ever ſo true, and the Hand of the Patron ever ſo ſteady. I ſhall exemplify this by a very common Inſtance. We will ſuppoſe a Perſon to leave a conſiderable Sum of Money to ſuch a Number of poor People; and tho' this Parallel will not run, as they ſay, upon all four, it will anſwer as far as I intend to apply it. It will not indeed touch like two Planes in every Part, but like two Globes in a ſingle Point. We will ſuppoſe farther, that the *Donor* appointed certain *Truſtees* for the Diſtribution of this Charity, according to the *Exigency* of the Objects. No one, I preſume, will offer to ſay that this Money could be intended for the *Benefit* of the *Truſtees*, for them to provide for their *Relations* or *Friends*, without any regard to their Circumſtances, but for the Relief of thoſe who wanted Charity, and to be diſtributed to the ſeveral Objects in proportion to their Wants: And tho' the *Donor* did not *ſpecify* the *Perſons* who ſhould partake of the Charity, or determine their *ſeveral Shares*, yet the *Truſtees* were bound to conſider the *Condition* of the Candidates, and, by the Help of common Senſe and common Honeſty, might tolerably well fulfil the Intention of the Giver. This Inſtance I bring, not to inſinuate that the Revenues of the Clergy are *Charity* (for they are in the Nature of *Hire* or *Reward* for *Service* perform'd) but to ſhew that there may be a *general Obligation*, and that ſuch a general Obligation may be diſcharg'd, without a *particular Direction*: And the Application is eaſy.

From this State of the Caſe (which I apprehend to be a true and a clear one) it follows,

That any *one particular* Clergyman, however qualified or deſerving, ought not to *engroſs* ſuch a Share of the Eccleſiaſtical Revenue, as will interfere with the *Right*, i. e. *reaſonble Expectation* of the *Body* of the Clergy, or be injurious to the Intereſt of *Religion*, by leſſening their *common* Hopes of Advancement; which is a neceſſary Incitement to Merit, while human Nature

ture continues to be ſuch as conſtant Experience has found it to be. I would not be thought to be at all inclinable to the *levelling* Scheme, which is the other Extreme, and equally wrong. Diſtinctions of *Honour* and *Profit* there muſt be for diſtinguiſh'd Abilities and Services; but what I mean is, that the Preferments of Clergymen ſhould bear *ſome Proportion*, not only to their *perſonal Merit*, but to the *general Proviſion* which is made for the Clergy; or elſe many Clergymen may be hardly and injuriouſly dealt by, and great Diſcouragement given to *Merit in general*, even where *no one* hath more than he deſerves, if his Merit be conſidered *ſeparately* from that of others. But if *one* Perſon enjoys five or ſix Preferments, which will make it impoſſible that many others, equally deſerving, ſhould have *two*, or perhaps *one*, it is not in this Caſe ſufficient to ſay he *deſerves* it; becauſe his *Merit* cannot be *ſeparated* in the Conſideration of it, but muſt be conſider'd *relatively* to the *Proviſion* which is made, and to the Merit of the *reſt* of the Body, who have the ſame Claim to a ſuitable Reward. If the *general Revenue* be inſufficient, there is a Defect in the *Eſtabliſhment*; but in the Diſtribution of it to the *ſeveral* Expectants, the *Good of the Whole*, and the *general Intereſt*, muſt be regarded. But how can this *common Good* be promoted, and this *general Intereſt* regarded, while one Perſon in the Church enjoys ſix times as much as hundreds who deſerve as much? Not that I think *Pluralities*, any more than an *Inequality*, unjuſtifiable. On the contrary, I am ſenſible that the *Credit* and *Intereſt* of the Body of the Clergy can't be ſupported, under the preſent State of the Church, without them; and I mention this Circumſtance, rather in *Vindication*, than by way of *Accuſation*. For, tho' the Clamours of the Diſaffected never were louder than at preſent, and the Conduct of ſome have given too much Occaſion for them, by an inſatiable Thirſt after an Accumulation of Promotions yet, in *General*, there is leſs Cauſe of Offence given on this Account than in former Times, when the Clergy were in much more Eſteem with the People.

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LETTER II.

PUBLICK *Authority* having eſtabliſhed a certain Share of the *Revenue* of the Nation, for the *Maintenance* and *Reward* of a Sett of Men who are appropriated to the Service of *Religion*, it follows, that the *Clergy* have as much *Right* to it as any other Member of the Society has to his *Eſtate*, and that *each* of them *ought to have* ſuch a particular Share as ſhall be proportionable to their *Merit*, *i. e.* in Proportion as they anſwer the *Ends* for which the *Legiſlature* may *reaſonably be ſuppoſed* to have appointed the Revenue. This, I ſay, is agreeable to the *Intention* of the *Law* of the *Land*, as well as the *Law* of *Reaſon*. And that the *Ends* propoſed by the *Legiſlature* may be duly anſwered, publick TESTS are required of the Candidates for any Benefice, of their being *qualified* to anſwer thoſe Ends: If any Candidate gives *legal* Proof of his having the *Qualifications* required by *Law*, the *Patron* has an Action againſt the *Biſhop*, if he refuſes him Inſtitution; but if the Biſhop can make his *legal Diſqualification* appear to the Courts of Law, the *Law indemnifies*, as much as *Conſcience obliges* him to reject ſuch a one: From whence I infer theſe two Things as evide Deductions.

Firſt, That *no* Man, in the Opinion of the *Legiſlature*, ought to be excluded from his *proper* Share of the Revenue, ſo appropriated, who *has* the Qualifications required by *Law*.

Secondly, That *every* Man ought to be excluded from having *any* Part of it, who has *not* thoſe Qualifications.

The *Legiſlature* has an indiſputable Authority to determine the *Qualifications* of the Perſons who are to enjoy that Revenue, which it has a *Right* to *appropriate*.

Thoſe Qualifications are expreſly declared, and no *private* Perſon has a Power to *alter* what *publick Authority* has a Power to *eſtabliſh*; and this Eſtabliſhment has all the binding Force that any Eſtabliſhment can have, becauſe the *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical* Authority have concurred in making it: But beſides the Obligation ariſing from *Authority*, it is fit, in *itſelf*, that publick *Wiſdom* ſhould determine Matters of a publick Nature; and the united Wiſdom of the Nation is moſt likely to determine wiſely.

What leads People into a miſtaken Notion of their Power is this; *Patrons*, becauſe *Patronage* is annex'd to their *Eſtate*, look upon it as an *abſolute Poſſeſſion* which they can diſpoſe of in an *arbitrary* Manner; whereas it is only a *limited Privilege* and *Truſt*. The *Privilege* conſiſts in having the Liberty of nominating a *qualified* Perſon to ſuch a Benefice as he has *merited* by his Behaviour; and the *Truſt* obliges him to do *Juſtice* to *Merit*. And this is a Privilege both honourable and advantageous; *honourable*, as it is a *great* and *important Truſt*, that gives a Man an Opportunity of doing Honour to Religion, Service to the Publick, a Kindneſs to Men of Worth; *advantageous*, as it allows him the Liberty of giving the *Preference* to his *Friend*, his *Relation*, or a Perſon recommended to his Favour by any other *private* Conſideration, *provided* he, *in himſelf*, be equally worthy of the Preferment. But every Clergyman, by the *Intention* of the *Legiſlature*, being intitled to a Share of the Revenue, anſwerable to his *Labour* and *Capacity*, PATRONS are the *Stewards* appointed, by the *ſame* Authority, *to give them their Portion in due Seaſon*; and they have no Commiſſion to require any *other Qualifications* than what the *Law* has required. If they had a *diſcretionary* Power (and if they have a Power of adding *any* Qualifications at all, they have an *unlimited* one) to require ſuch *additional* Qualifications as they ſhall think proper, it is in the Power of a Number of Patrons to agree among themſelves, in order to ſerve their own Purpoſes, to defeat the very *Deſign* of *Church Preferments*, to ſtarve one half of the Clergy, and turn what were intended, and ought to be employed,

ployed, for the Honour of God, and the eternal Welfare of Mankind, into Engines of State, and Inſtruments of Ambition or Avarice. The Reader will eaſily gueſs, that I have in my Thoughts, *chiefly*, the now almoſt univerſal Practice of making *political Opinions* and *Meaſures* a Qualification for any Preferment in the *Church*; and that ſo *neceſſary* a one, that without it, tho' Gentlemen have defended Religion by their Writings, and adorned it by their Examples; tho' they have been an Ornament to their Profeſſion, and a Bleſſing to the Community, yet they ſhall not be deemed worthy the ſmalleſt Reward, or the leaſt Notice, for no other Crime, but an Adherence to their Principles; while others, without any regard to their *Services*, or *Capacity*, ſhall be thought fit for the moſt arduous Stations, and worthy of the largeſt Benefice, or the higheſt Honours, for no other Conſideration beſides a firm Attachment to a PARTY: A Practice ſo openly avowed, that one would be apt to think it not only juſtifiable, but *meritorious*; and yet ſo *exceedingly* pernicious and criminal, that it may juſtly ſeem ſtrange that any *good* Man could ever come into it.

When Men are determined not to alter their Conduct, it is natural for them to defend by *Argument* what they practiſe upon *Intereſt* or *Inclination*; and Ingenuity can give Colourings to almoſt any thing that ſtands in need of them. This flagrant Abuſe of a *publick Truſt* has its Plea, and I ſhall endeavour to do it Juſtice. "It is pretended by each Party, that the oppoſite one "takes ſuch Meaſures as will endanger the *Conſtitution*, "and therefore that they act more agreeably to the "*Truſt* repoſed in them by the *Legiſlature*, by pre-"ferring Men who will oppoſe ſuch dangerous De-"ſigns, than they could do by promoting Perſons of "the greateſt Merit who would probably join with "them." This is the Whole of the Argument; to which I anſwer,

Firſt, *Patronage*, as I have proved, is a *complicated Truſt*. PATRONS are *Truſtees*, not only for the *Clergy* and the *Conſtitution*, but for the *People* who are committed to the Care of the *Clergy*. The *People* have a

Right to demand of the *Patron* a *proper* Paſtor; one that is *able* and *willing* to diſcharge the Duties of his Function among them; and, in the *ordinary Courſe of Things*, their *eternal Happineſs* depends upon his *Capacity* and *Conduct*. And are the People to be *damned?* Or is their *Salvation* to be *hazarded?* Or their ſpiritual Welfare to be *greatly injured* by the Nomination of a Paſtor who is *inſufficient*, either in reſpect to his *Ability* or *Morals*, to execute the miniſterial Office effectually? And this only for Fear, if an able and faithful one were appointed, he might vote for a Member of Parliament, who might vote for a Miniſtry, who might take Meaſures deſtructive of Religion. This is doing a certain Evil to prevent an uncertain one. However, as it is *Malum in ſe*, abſolutely *Evil in itſelf*, no Conſequences can juſtify it. A Man might as well plead a Privilege to commit *Fornication*, *Theft*, or any other Crime, under a Pretence that it might be the Means of preventing *greater* Crimes. For to hazard ſo many People's eternal Happineſs, and to diſhonour God and Religion, are Crimes as *unalterable* as any other Acts of *Immorality*.

Secondly, It deſerves to be conſider'd how inexpedient it is, that Perſons, in the Execution of a *publick Truſt*, ſhould depart from the *ſtated* Rules eſtabliſhed by *Authority*, as it gives them an Opportunity ſo often to ſubſtitute their particlular Paſſions, Views, Opinions, and Humours, inſtead of the Reaſons which ought to influence; by which Means the Expectations of Clergymen are ſo very precarious, that Gentlemen of Circumſtances, Capacity, and Integrity, who can promiſe themſelves Succeſs in any other Profeſſion, will not enter into Holy Orders, and the Church will neceſſarily be filled with Perſons of mean Extraction, narrow Fortunes, and abject Minds, who will be the moſt likely to ſacrifice their Character to their Intereſt; ſo that whatever Inconveniencies might attend an Adherence to the *eſtabliſhed* Qualifications in *particular Inſtances*, or whatever Good might *occaſionally* ariſe from a Liberty of adding to them, the Queſtion is, which Method would be beſt upon the *whole*, and in the *long Run*.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Therefore I obſerve, that the Danger of preferring Men of *Merit* without any Regard to *Party*, would not be ſo great as is pretended. For whence is it that ſo many Men of *Character* go the *Lengths* of a Party, but from the Force of *Intereſt*, which blinds the *Judgment*, and over-rules the *Will*? Take away the indirective Motive, and, in *general*, they would judge impartially, and act conſcientiouſly. I know very well the Force of Cuſtom, the Power of Obſtinacy, the Influence of a falſe Shame; that theſe and other ſuch like Motives will prevail upon many, who have been long, or are deeply engaged with a Set of Men, to continue their Attachment; but Numbers, when left to the Direction of their unbiaſſed Sentiments and Affections, would have Diſcernment enough to diſcover the Deſigns of their Leaders, and the Tendency of their Meaſures; and would have the Reſolution and Integrity to leave them whenever they leave the Intereſt of our *Conſtitution* in *Church* and *State*. And as to the growing and future Generations, they would come into the World without any ſuch *Prejudices* and *Prepoſſeſſions*, ſo that in a few Years Men of Learning, Piety and Parts, would *uniformly* conſult the Honour of *Religion* and the true Intereſt of the *Publick*, when ſuch a Conduct ceaſed to be any Bar to their Promotion. The moſt effectual Method to ſecure our *Eſtabliſhed Church*, would be to encourage ſuch as are beſt acquainted with the *Scriptures* and the Conſtitution of the *ancient* Church. It is almoſt impoſſible to ſuppoſe that theſe Men ſhould be diſaffected to the Church of *England* in which they have always been educated, and which, upon enquiry, they find to be ſo agreeable to the primitive Model and Practice. And if the ſame Care be us'd to diſtinguiſh *pious* and *diſintereſted* Clergymen, there will be the leſs Temptation, or Temptation from temporal Advantages will have the leſs Influence to ſeduce them to act contrary to their Judgment and habitual Inclination in favour of a *Party*. So again, for the *Eſtabliſhed Government*; an *honeſt*, *upright*, *conſcientious*, *ſenſible* and *learned* Clergy, are the leaſt likely to *falſify* or *break* their ſolemn Engagements,

ments, and to overturn or endanger the Conſtitution in the *State*, which is ſo neceſſary to the Support of the Conſtitution in the *Church*. Whereas, *weak* and *ignorant* Men may eaſily be impos'd upon by Sophiſtry, and miſled by hypocritical Pretences, to join with any Sett of Men in any Meaſures, however deſtructive and unchriſtian. Or if Clergymen be *greedy*, *worldly-minded*, and *ambitious*, whatever ſuperior Share of *Learning*, *Parts* and *Knowledge* they may have, it is too notorious from *Hiſtory* that they will ſacrifice every thing to the Security of their ſecular Intereſt, and the Accompliſhment of their Schemes; ſo that they will be true to no Party, and to no Meaſures but what will ſerve their own Purpoſes, true to any Party and to any Meaſures that will advance them. But,

Fourthly, Whatever Inconveniencies, whatever dangerous Conſequences might happen, no Inconveniencies, no Danger can be greater to Religion, Learning, the Conſtitution, and the publick Welfare, than the Effects of confining all *Eccleſiaſtical* Promotions within the narrow Channel of a *Party*. When *political* Merit is found to ſupply all Defects both *Intellectual* and *Moral*, to give all Accompliſhments and Graces, the Bulk of young People will ſoon confine their Studies and Endeavours to the moſt eaſy, the ſhorteſt and moſt effectual Method of Advancement. It is more painful to acquire uſeful Knowledge, and make a Figure in Literature, to get the Dominion over our Paſſions, and contract Habits, and exalted Degrees of Virtue and Religion, than to give a right Vote, to be loud at an Election, to expreſs an intemperate and uncharitable Heat; and when the leſs difficult Qualifications for Favour become the moſt acceptable and forceable Recommendations to it, Mankind in *general* will not be at the Trouble of attaining to Accompliſhments, which, *at the beſt*, will be of no Uſe to them in their Purſuits. There can be nothing clearer in *Speculation*, or more certain from *Experience*, than that a *Diſregard* to *real Merit* will in time *deſtroy* it. And in Proportion as the *Clergy* degenerate, the *People* will degenerate too. Whatever has a natural Tendency to corrupt the former, will draw the

Corruption of the latter after it. To propoſe the *Security* of Religion, by *diſcountenancing* it in thoſe who by their Inſtructions and Example are to propagate it; or to conſult the *Safety* of the *Government* by Schemes that will deſtroy *Religion*, is abſurd and wild. I wiſh the Abſurdity were not ſo apparent as it is from the State of the Nation! We have been long groaning under a *Chronical* Diſtemper, which grows every Day worſe, and we are afraid of applying the proper *Alteratives* for its Cure, leſt the Remedy ſhould turn into an *Acute* one. We are in a *lingering*, or rather in a *galloping Conſumption*, which, if neglected, *muſt* be our Deſtruction; but we dare not attempt to give Strength and Nouriſhment, for fear of bringing on a *Fever*. If Men act upon this View, that our *Conſtitution* may outlive ſeveral of thoſe who are helping every Day to effect its Ruin, it is a probable Scheme, but their *Poſterity* will not be beholden to them for it. I promiſed to treat this Subject as *inoffenſively* as I could, and ſo I have; but if I propoſe to offend none of my Readers, I muſt be *ſilent*: If the Subject were leſs *offenſive*, it would not be *ſeaſonable*. But as there is ſo much Occaſion to ſpeak theſe unwelcome Truths, I ſhall ſpeak them freely, tho' without any other Warmth than what ariſes from a diſintereſted Zeal, and without any other Motive than the Hopes of doing ſome little Good.

LET.

LETTER III.

IN my laſt I obſerved that *publick Authority* had determined the *Qualifications* of thoſe who are to enjoy Eccleſiaſtical Benefices, and that therefore *Patrons*, who are only *Truſtees* for the due Diſpoſition of them, have not a *diſcretionary* Power to make *additional* Qualifications, in order to exclude ſuch as are *legally* qualified: I obſerve next,

That ſuch as have not the Qualifications required by *Law*, are by *Law* excluded, and ought not to enjoy *any* Eccleſiaſtical Promotion. And this Deduction, tho' not truer, yet is more obvious from what I laid down before, than the former one. For there may be Room to imagine, that the *additional* Qualifications come within the *Intention* of the *Legiſlature*, tho' they are not *ſpecified* in the *Law*; but if the *Law* expreſly requires any thing as a Qualification, there can be no Room to doubt whether the *Legiſlature* INTENDED that any Perſon who has *not* that Qualification ſhould be *excluded*. The Law expreſly requires, as a Qualification for a Benefice, that a Man ſhould believe the *Doctrines*, and be well affected to the *Worſhip* and *Government* of the Church *eſtabliſhed* in this Nation. Now can it be made a Queſtion, whether it were the *Intention* of the *Legiſlature*, that ſuch as *diſbelieve* any of the *Doctrines*, the *Doctrine* of the *Trinity* for Inſtance, or are *diſaffected* to the *eſtabliſhed Worſhip* and *Government*, ſhould be excluded from having any Benefice? And if the *Legiſlature*, the *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical* Authority, have a Power (which cannot be denied) of making Laws that are binding upon the Subjects of that Authority, it cannot be *lawful* for Patrons to *give* a Benefice to one excluded by the *Law*, or for ſuch a one to *accept*

cept it. Both the *Donation* and the *Acceptance* are criminal, becauſe an actual *Diſobedience* to a *Lawful Authority* in Matters which they have a Right to determine; and an Invaſion of *Property*, by poſſeſſing what is by Law given to another. The Crime of giving a *falſe Teſt*, declaring their *Aſſent* and *Conſent* to Things which they do not *believe* and *approve*, I ſhall not here conſider. The Learned Dr. *Waterland* has ſtated that Point to Satisfaction in two Pamphlets upon *Subſcription:* But I conſider the Caſe as a *Violation* of a *plain Law*, and an *Injury* to ſomebody in his *Property*. The moſt parallel Caſe that I can bring is, that of a *Fellowſhip* in a College. The Statutes of a College, we will ſuppoſe, exclude all *married* Men, and yet a Fellow may *clandeſtinely* marry; and after he has by *Matrimony* forfeited his Fellowſhip, he may continue to enjoy it. But, tho' Men by Intereſt have been tempted to be guilty of this Practice, I never met with any Body wicked or weak enough to defend it; becauſe it is manifeſtly a *Breach* of the *Statutes* which are binding upon every Member of the Society, and an *Injury* to ſome other *qualified* Perſon who is kept out of the Fellowſhip. But if ſuch a Fellow, upon Suſpicion, were called upon to declare whether he were married or not, and he ſhould deny it, this would add *Inſincerity* and *Falſhood* to *Diſobedience* and *Injuſtice*. How is the Caſe a Whit better in reſpect to *diſqualified* Perſons accepting, or continuing to enjoy, an *Eccleſiaſtical Benefice?* Are not the Laws of the Land as binding upon the Conſcience of every Subject, as the Statutes of a College upon all its Members? Is it leſs injurious to *acquire*, or *keep*, 2 or 300 *l.* a Year, perhaps a great deal more, than a a leſs Income? The larger the Revenue, and the longer the Poſſeſſion, the greater the Crime. Or is it not *immoral* to *diſſemble* and *deceive* in the one Caſe as well as in the other? And is not every Patron who *nominates* any Clerk to a Promotion, whom he knows to be *diſaffected* to the *eſtabliſhed Doctrines*, *Worſhip* or *Government* of the Church, *acceſſory* to the *Diſobedience*, the *Inſincerity*, the *Diſſimulation* and *Injuſtice* of which the Clerk is guilty by his Acceptance and Poſſeſſion?

Secondly, But I am afraid the Caſe is ſtill worſe than I have as yet repreſented it. *Patrons* not only aſſume to themſelves a Power of *diſqualifying* Perſons who are legally qualified for Preferment, but make their very *Qualifications* a *Diſqualification*. Their *Title* is their *Bar*: Their *Merit* is their *Crime*: Their *Glory* becomes their *Diſgrace*: They have a zealous Affection for the *eſtabliſhed Doctrines*, and *therefore* they are unfit for Preferment in the *Eſtabliſhed Church*. On the other hand, Men's *Diſqualifications* are ſometimes their *Recommendation*. Their *Diſſaffection* is their *Merit*. They ſeek and obtain Promotions in a *Chriſtian* Church, by depreciating *Chriſtian Doctrines* and *Chriſtian Inſtitutions*. They riſe in an *Eſtabliſhed Church* by ſhewing an Inclination to *alter* it. The Order of things is inverted: The *Conſtitution* becomes a *Party*, and a *Party* the *Conſtitution*. Every one, no doubt, has a Right of *private Judgment*. If upon Examination he cannot ſee Reaſon to believe the *eſtabliſhed Doctrines*, he has the Liberty to *diſſent* from us; if he does not approve the *eſtabliſhed Worſhip*, he may *ſeparate* from us: Nay, what ſhould hinder him from endeavouring, by all lawful Means, to procure an *Alteration* in the *Eſtabliſhment*? But ſurely it is againſt all Order and good Government, againſt all the Rules of Honeſty and Honour, to *exclude* Perſons from publick Favour and Honour, or to promote others in direct *Oppoſition* to our *Conſtitution*, to the *ſtanding Laws* of our *Country*! If this Practice can be reconciled to the Scheme of *Moral Virtue*, which many are attempting to exalt above *Revelation*, I ſhall think as meanly of *their Morality* as they ſeem to do of *Chriſtianity*.

Thus far then we have proceeded in the Argument upon Principles that have their Foundation in the very Nature of *Government*, *Society* and *Religion*; from whence it appears, that the *Legiſlature* having *eſtabliſhed* a Revenue for the better Maintenance and Encouragemene of thoſe who are dedicated to the *Miniſtry*, PATRONS are obliged to give it to ſuch Perſons, and in ſuch Meaſure and Proportion as ſhall beſt anſwer the *Ends* propoſed by the *Eſtabliſhment* of it; and thoſe

Ends

Ends being the *Salvation* of *Mankind*, and the *Honour* of *God*, that thoſe are intitled to the largeſt Share, who, in the Opinion of the *Legiſlature* (as far as we can judge of their Opinion) are beſt *qualified* to anſwer thoſe Ends, or have beſt anſwered them.

Thirdly, But from hence I go on to obſerve farther, that *Patrons* are obliged not only to reward *Merit*, and to give *Precedency* to Men of the greateſt Merit, but to conſider the *particular* Qualifications of the Perſons promoted, and, as far as may be, ſo adapt the *Men* to the *Preferments* as will do moſt Service to *Religion* and to *Mankind*; this being THE GREAT END of all Eccleſiaſtical Preferments. Archbiſhop *Laud*, that great Patron of *Merit*, took Care to inform himſelf of the Characters of Clergymen in every Part of the Kingdom, what every one was beſt *fitted* for, whether for his Prudence and ſocial Virtues to be intruſted with a difficult *Parochial Care*, where *Conduct* as well as *Piety*, and *Knowledge* of *Mankind* as well as *Books*, is requiſite to the Succeſs of his Miniſtry; whether by his Learning or great Parts, to do Service to *Chriſtianity* in the Capacity of a *Writer*, or a Preacher to a learned or captious Audience; whether by his Wiſdom, Courage and Integrity, peculiarly qualified for the *Government* of the Church; and, as far as he had Opportunities of doing it, he promoted them ſuitably to their ſeveral Talents, and rewarded them ſuitably to their ſeveral Deſerts. This ſurely was a true *Chriſtian* Rule: For if *Patrons* be obliged to conſult the Intereſt of *Chriſtianity*, and the *Salvation* of *Chriſtians* (which I defy the whole World to diſprove) the *ordinary* Means of doing this muſt be by placing ſuch Perſons in the ſeveral *Pariſhes* as will rightly divide the Word of God, preach ſound Doctrine in the moſt profitable Manner, be the moſt acceptable, decent, and exemplary in their Behaviour. If the *Faith* muſt be defended, how can that be done but by learned and ingenious Men? And if Learning be neceſſary, what is the Way to promote Learning but by encouraging it, by finding out Men of Parts and Induſtry, who are willing to ſtudy, and capable of writing, and by giving ſuch Men proper Coun-

tenance and Aſſiſtance? If we expect to ſee the Church wiſely and faithfully governed, wiſe and faithful Governours muſt be ſet over it.

Well, but is every Patron, upon any Vacancy, obliged to travel round the Nation, or employ Emiſſaries in all Parts, to find out the worthieſt and fitteſt Man? Or muſt not he provide for a *Relation* or *Friend*, while a worthier or fitter Man is unprovided for? This would make Patronage a *Snare*, or, like the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies, an intolerable Yoke.

It is an eaſy matter to ſtart Difficulties, and as eaſy for a Conſcientious Man to do his Duty. A *Private* Gentlemen can't be ſuppoſed to be acquainted with every Man's Character, and if he makes choice of the worthieſt and fitteſt Perſon that he knows, This, I preſume, may ſuffice for a *General*, *Ordinary* Rule. But in *extraordinary* Caſes, where the Benefice is of a very great Value, or the Duty of a very difficult Nature, *particular* Care and Caution ought to be us'd. Thus again, as to *Friends* and *Relations*, Affinity and Friendſhip are allowable as well as natural Conſiderations; and if the Preferment be tolerably ſuited to the Capacity and Merit of the Perſon, *detur digno* I apprehend to be a good *common* Rule. There are Places and Rewards proportioned to Mens Abilities and Services: A Clergyman is not to be ſet aſide as uſeleſs, becauſe he is not a *Waterland*, and he may deſerve *ſomething*, tho' he has not defended the Faith ſo learnedly as that moſt able Champion: But if the *Patron* knows of any Perſon who has done eminent Service to *Chriſtianity* by his Writings and Labours, and is deſtitute, or ſhamefully neglected by the *Publick*, *detur digniſſimo* muſt ſuperſede all private Obligations. He is *every* Man's *Relation* and *Friend*, and it ought to be the *Concern* of every Man to ſupport and reward him, tho' Men of ſuch *Publick Characters* are the *more immed ate* Care of *publick Patrons*. Let Men but have Honeſty enough to make a *Conſcience* of doing their Duty, and they will *generally* have Judgment ſufficient to direct them; but if they take Advice of their *Intereſt* or *Paſſions*, they will be miſguided in the plaineſt Caſes. This brings to my

my Mind an Anſwer which the learned and pious Biſhop *Hooper*, gave to a particular Friend of mine, to whom his Lordſhip offer'd a *Dignity* in his Cathedral. My Friend thought fit to decline the Offer, and took the Liberty to recommend to his Lordſhip's Favour the *Great* and *Good* Mr. *Norris*, who, to the Reproach and Infamy of the Nation, had then only a little Living, and died unpoſſeſſed of any *Dignity* in the Church to which he had been ſuch an Ornament. The Biſhop acknowledged Mr. *Norris*'s extraordinary Merit, expreſs'd the utmoſt Eſteem for him, and the ſtrongeſt Inclination to ſerve him, but withal replied, that *he was not in his Dioceſe*; as if the Succeſs of his Labours, and Influence of his excellent Writings were *local*, confin'd only to the particular Dioceſe in which he was benefic'd. A Perſon who does *publick* Service makes the PUBLICK his Debtor; and the whole *Chriſtian World* is oblig'd to any Man that does eminent Service to Chriſtianity. I have the greateſt Regard for the Memory of his Lordſhip, and would not have mention'd this Inſtance to his Diſadvantage, if it had not been to ſhew how little the Nature of *Patronage* had been conſider'd, even by this *judicious* and *conſcientious* Prelate.

I ſhall end this Letter with the Example of that knowing and wiſe Princeſs, QUEEN ELIZABETH, as it is recorded by Mr. *Strype*, in Vol. I. of her *Annals*, p. 550. "The dangerous Encreaſe of *Papiſts* in the North and "other Parts of the Realm, was occaſioned chiefly by "the want of learned Miniſters, who might preach "to the People, and inform them in true Religion. "And this was to be done by encouraging the Study "of *Divinity* in the UNIVERSITIES; which was now "much laid aſide, ſince they ſaw how *Eccleſiaſtical* Places "and Preferments were diſpos'd of; how, not the *Learned* ſo much as the DEPENDANTS upon GREAT "MEN, were advanc'd in the Church. Therefore it was "thought adviſeable to revive the Hopes of *Students*; "and for that Purpoſe, the QUEEN ſent a kind Letter to the *High-Chancellor* of *Cambridge* (and the "like, very probably, to the *High-Chancellor* of

"*Oxford*)

" *Oxford*) which he forthwith ſent to his *Vice-Chan-*
" *cellor*. The Purport of the Letter was to this effect,
" *viz*. That *ſuch as were well learned in divine Things,*
" *and ſhould be commended to her for ſuch by the Univerſi-*
" *ty, ſhe ſhould take care of, and ſee them preferred to*
" *Places in the Church, both of Wealth and Honour*;
" *and that according to their* MERITS: *and that ſhe*
" *would allow honorary Salaries to hopefull Youth; and*
" *that ſhe would prefer none but ſuch as either the Biſhops*
" *or Univerſity ſhould recommend to her by their Teſtimo-*
" *nials*. The Benefit whereof was this, that whereas
" before it was not *Learning* ſo much as *Ambition* and
" *waiting upon Noblemen*, and depending upon the In-
" tereſt of the *Great* ones at *Court*, that made way to
" Preferment; now there would be no further Cauſe
" for Scholars to be ſollicitous about Livelihoods or Re-
" wards. The *Vice-Chancellor* anſwer'd the Chancel-
" lor at large, ſignifying the great Joy of the *Univer-*
" *ſity* at the *Royal* Letter: And that he doubted not,
" but the Studies of ſome, diſcouraged by the miſera-
" ble Toſſings, and frequent Changes of the Times,
" might now eaſily be inflam'd by ſuch Promiſes: And
" he took Order that the Heads of every College
" ſhould take down the Names and Degrees of all ſuch
" as were intended for the Study of Divinity, which
" were ſent up to the *Chancellor* at Court." This
was one of the Methods by which that moſt politick
Princeſs conſulted the Proſperity of the Publick, the
Security and Honour of her Crown. And her Succeſs
was anſwerable to her Wiſdom.

LET-

LETTER IV.

HAVING prov'd that *Patronage* is a TRUST for which every Man muſt be accountable, *Patrons* are oblig'd to take care into whoſe Hands they reſign it. The Practice of *buying* and *ſelling* Livings, as it is *commonly* manag'd, is abſolutely unlawful. The beſt Bidder is ſure to be the Purchaſer, tho' a known *Infidel*, or an open *Debauchee*. But if ſuch Sales be juſtifiable, it is juſtifiable to buy and ſell *Religion*, and to make a Gain of the Salvation of Mankind: for if a Man ſells, or leaves by *Will*, a Patronage to one, who, in all Probability, will nominate the moſt unfit Perſon he can find, he makes a *Sale* or a *Deed of Gift* of the Honour of *Religion*, and the eternal Happineſs of all thoſe who are likely to be loſt under the Miniſtry of a bad Paſtor. In ſhort, it is an Abſurdity to ſuppoſe that a *Chriſtian* is at liberty to throw up a Truſt into the Hands of one who will, probably, abuſe it to the Diſhonour of *Chriſtianity*. I cannot help, on this Occaſion, taking notice of the Conduct of a worthy Nobleman, the late Earl of *Pembroke*, who, when his Steward propoſed to raiſe a Sum of Money by the Sale of Livings, declar'd, that he wou'd ſooner ſell all the Plate that he had in his Houſe. An Opinion worthy the Piety of a true *Chriſtian*! A Declaration worthy the Greatneſs of an ancient Nobleman!

Another Conſequence from the Nature of *Patronage*, conſider'd as a *Truſt*, is this; that *Patrons* ought not *generally*, if *ever*, to make an *abſolute* Promiſe of any *particular* Preferment, ſince 'tis *rarely* poſſible to be certain *beforehand* whether the Performance of this Promiſe

miſe will be conſiſtent with their *antecedent* Obligations as *Truſtees*. For, if the Perſon *was*, or *afterwards becomes*, any way unfit for the Promotion, or unworthy of it, he ought not to have it; or, if by giving it to another, the *Ends* of all Eccleſiaſtical Preferment will be *better* anſwer'd, it ought to be ſo applied. This was a *prior* and *immutable* Obligation which is ſtrictly bound upon every *Patron* as a *Chriſtian*, and a Member of the *Community*. As a *Chriſtian*, nothing can diſcharge him from the Duty of acting ſo as may beſt promote the Intereſt of *Chriſtianity*; as a Member of the *Community*, he is perpetually oblig'd to ſtudy the Good of it. And therefore, ſince 'tis a known and plain Rule in Caſuiſtry, that no *ſubſequent* Obligation can deſtroy a *prior*, the Patron continues as much concern'd, in point of Conſcience, to give any particular Preferment to the Perſon who, in all Appearance, beſt deſerves it, and will do moſt Good with it, as if he had never made any ſuch Promiſe; conſequently, the Promiſe can never carry any Force or Obligation, where it cannot be perform'd without Injury to the Merits of other Claimants, and Prejudice to Religion, thoſe being Conſiderations that muſt always take Place of all others. To make this plainer, if poſſible, I ſhall reſume a Caſe which I have already put in a former Letter.

We will ſuppoſe a certain Sum of Money given to *charitable* Uſes, and Perſons appointed by the Donor to diſtribute it to the propereſt Objects, and to each Object according to the neceſſity of this Circumſtance; I ask, is any one of theſe *Truſtees* at liberty to promiſe a *particular* Perſon ſuch a *particular* Share of the Money, before he knows what greater Objects of Charity, and what Number of them may appear. Thus in relation to *Eccleſiaſtical Preferments*, HERE is a certain Revenue appropriated by publick Authority for the Support of *Religion*, and the *Maintenance* and *Reward* of a Number of Men who are devoted to the Service of it. All Patrons, therefore, being under a *perpetual* Obligation to give their Preferments with a View to theſe Ends, they cannot be at liberty to make any Promiſe

that

that ſhall bind them to act *inconſiſtently* with them. In ſhort, the Matter ſtands thus: It can never be lawful to *make* ſuch a Promiſe, but where there is an *high Probability* that the Perſon, to whom it is made, *is*, and will *continue* to be fit and worthy, and that no Circumſtances will ariſe that may make it *more* fit and proper to give the Preferment to another; for, wherever there was at the time of *making* the Promiſe, or *afterwards happens*, ſuch an Unfitneſs in the Perſon, or any other Candidate appears who *ought to have had the Preference in caſe no ſuch Promiſe had been made*, the Promiſe ſtands for nothing, foraſmuch as there is an Obligation *ſuperior* to it which nothing can vacate. I would willingly be as clear I poſſibly can, and therefore I ſhall once again ſee how it will appear in another Light, if we ſuppoſe a Gentleman intruſted with the Care of recommending a *Phyſician* to a Perſon labouring under a dangerous and difficult Diſtemper. Now, would any one imagine this Gentleman at liberty to recommend a *Quack*, or an ignorant, or a diſhoneſt Man, only becauſe he had haſtily, or to oblige a Friend, or for any other Reaſon, not reſpecting the Safety of the ſick Perſon, *promiſed* ſuch a one, that whenever this Perſon ſhould be ſick, he ſhou'd have him for a Patient. Or, if there were ſeveral Phyſicians in the Neighbourhood, one of whom was generally allow'd to be greatly ſuperior to the reſt in *Skill*, in *Diligence* or *Integrity*; I preſume all Mankind wou'd judge the *Truſtee* bound in Conſcience and Honour to employ him, under whoſe Management the Life of the Patient wou'd be manifeſtly moſt ſafe. Where *Patrons* have a true Notion of Religion and the Danger Men may be in of *periſhing eternally* thro' the Neglect or Ignorance of thoſe who are to teach them the way to Heaven, they wou'd eaſily ſee the Aptneſs of the Compariſon, and the Force of the Argument drawn from it.

In Caſes determinable by common Senſe, there is no occaſion for any Appeal to Authorities: Yet, if any Regard be due to the Opinion of Great and Good Men, I am ſupported by the Practice of a Prelate of our own

Church, very eminent for his Abilities as well as Virtues, in a Reign diſtinguiſh'd by a Bench of the moſt able and pious Biſhops. The Hiſtorian informs us, that A. B. *Sandys* refus'd to promiſe a *particular* Preferment in his Gift, when it was requeſted of him by his dear Friend, the LORD TREASURER BURLEIGH, whom, of all Men, he was moſt deſirous to oblige; alledging, that he thought ſuch *abſolute* and *particular* Promiſes unjuſtifiable in *Patrons*, whoſe Nomination to an *Eccleſiaſtical Preferment*, was not like common Favours, of *arbitrary* Diſpoſition, but an Act of *Juſtice* and *Piety*, which are Matters of *ſtrict Duty*. And the many great Inconveniencies attending the common Practice of making ſuch Promiſes are daily experienced. The moſt worthy Men are aſham'd of the little Artifices, and mean Importunities, by which they are uſually extorted; the forward Boldneſs of the leaſt deſerving, thus get the Start of modeſt and honourable Merit; and Men, by ſuch *imaginary* Obligations, tie up their Hands from doing their Duty, and then think it a very *good Plea* for a *very bad* Nomination to ſay, that they had *given their Word*. Given their Word! What if they had promis'd to diſcountenance Virtue and encourage Vice? What if they had promis'd to prefer a *Jew* or a *Turk* to a Promotion in the *Chriſtian* Church? Wou'd it be their Duty to keep ſuch a raſh Promiſe, or to break it? I conceive, there cou'd be no room for a Doubt in ſo plain a Caſe. But why wou'd ſuch an Engagement be void of itſelf? Becauſe every *Chriſtian* is under a *prior* and *indiſputable* Tie, which no ſubſequent Contract can looſen. So that if a *Patron* has *given his Word* an hundred times over, he is as much oblig'd to regard the *Ends* of all Eccleſiaſtical Promotions, and to anſwer them to the utmoſt of his Power, as if he had enter'd into no Engagement at all.

But tho' I condemn the frequent Practice of making *abſolute* Promiſes of *particular* Preferments, yet I think it not only lawful, but highly commendable, to give the Deſerving *general* Aſſurances, in the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt Terms, that they ſhall be provided for at a proper

proper Time, and in a proper Manner. This wou'd give Induſtry Reſolution and Courage; give almoſt new Powers and Faculties. For want of this Countenance and Encouragement (which animates a generous Mind, enlivens and invigorates the whole Man) how many wear away an uſeleſs and burthenſive Life in Obſcurity, in Spleen and Vapours, who might have ſhin'd with Luſtre in *Publick*, and been a Bleſſing and an Ornament to it, if their good Inclinations had been cheriſh'd, and their Abilities aided, by the Favour and Aſſiſtance of the Rich and Powerful. I cannot more ſtrongly repreſent this Caſe than in the Words of a late Piece, intitled, *The Clergyman's Right of Maintenance vindicated*; ſays the Author, *p.* 63; "A neglected "Condition is attended with inſuperable Diſadvantages; "not only with the want of the proper Means of "Knowledge, but a Diſinclination and Incapacity to "make uſe of them. *He* will neither have any Appe-"tite towards his Studies, nor be capable of attending "upon them without Diſtraction, whoſe Mind is fill'd "with anxious and diſquieting Thoughts. Anxiety of "Mind is as inconſiſtent with Study and Contem-"plation, as it is inſeparable from Poverty and Diſtreſs. "The Cares of the World will ſometimes intrude "themſelves, and interrupt the Attention in the moſt "ſecret Retirement, at the moſt improper Seaſons, and "in the moſt important Duties. They hinder an Im-"provement in every perſonal Qualification, and ob-"ſtruct the Succeſs of every Part of the Paſtoral Of-"fice. Continual Difficulties, frequent Diſappoint-"ments, and the Neglect of the World gradually im-"pair the Powers of the Body and the Faculties of the "Mind. That *Vigour* of *Conſtitution*, without which "the Burthen of their Office will be too heavy for them, "will decay. That *Vivacity* of *Spirit*, which excites "a noble Ambition, and animates Men in the Purſuit "of laudable Attempts, will languiſh, if not expire. "That *Warmth of Imagination* and *Fertility* of *Invention*, "which wou'd enliven and beautify their Compoſiti-"ons, will grow cold and barren. Even their *Perception*

" will become dull, their *Reaſon* enfeebled and obſcur'd " by heavy Melancholy. Where is that *Chearfulneſs* " which renders Converſation delightful? That *Sweet-* " *neſs of Temper* which attracts the Affections of Man- " kind? The *Spirits* are oppreſſed, and the Diſpoſi- " tions ſouer'd; the one cannot exert themſelves, and " the other is too much upon the ferment. If the Mind " ſinks under the oppreſſive Weight, the Behaviour of " the Man will be Mean and Sordid, and, to uſe the " Language of *Eccleſiaſticus*, *he will make himſelf an Un-* " *derling to fooliſh* [or wicked] *Men*. If an uncom- " mon Force of Mind enables him to bear up a- " gainſt the united Oppoſition of Poverty and Con- " tempt, he will be apt to grow captious and turbulent; " uneaſy to himſelf and troubleſome to others. *Con-* " *tempt* (even without the help of *Poverty*) has a migh- " ty Force towards creating a Diffidence and Diſtruſt " of ourſelves: It intimidates the Mind, and renders " Men incapable of doing Juſtice to their natural Abi- " lities. Thus they are overlook'd by the World, " when their Incapacity to appear in a more advanta- " geous Light ariſes only from their not having better " Encouragement." To which I will add, that when they have been long buried in a *low* Station, unobſerv'd and unrewarded, they grow too *inconſiderable* for a *bet-* *ter*; *Neglect* has render'd them deſpis'd; *Real Contempt* begets *imaginary Demerit*; and *ill Treatment*, by the *Continuance* of it, becomes a Pretence for never making the *injur'd* Satisfaction: As *Succeſs*, on the other hand, grows up into *Merit*, and one Preferment *qualifies* a Man for an higher, 'till an exalted Station becomes a moſt *natural* and *proper* Promotion, without any re- gard to *perſonal* Abilities and Qualifications. It will not be expected that I ſhould produce Inſtances of this latter kind; and for fear of offending the *Modeſty* of others, I ſhall paſs over the former too. The one I am unwilling to be put to the Bluſh, by taking publick No- tice of their ill Succeſs, and their Title to better Treat- ment: The others I ſhall leave to bluſh in Secret, un- der the Conſciouſneſs of having met with better than they

they deſerv'd. The Unfortunate, I hope, will go on chearfully in their Labours, being fully perſuaded that they have a *Patron* in *Heaven* who will *render to every one according to their Works*; and all the Ill that I am inclin'd to wiſh to any who have been too amply recompenced, is, that their unmerited Poſſeſſions may not turn to their Condemnation hereafter, as they are a Reproach to them here.

Thus I have endeavoured to ſet forth the *Nature* of *Patronage:* A Subject, I am perſwaded, not duly underſtood, becauſe not duly conſider'd, by Perſons of a much better Underſtanding and more extenſive Knowledge, than the Author of theſe Letters imagines himſelf to be. In the *main* I dare undertake to defend what I have advanc'd; and if any one be ſurpriz'd at ſome of my Poſitions, perhaps his Surprize may be owing, not to their *Extravagance*, but their *Newneſs*; and may not be any Proof that the Writer is miſtaken, but that the Reader had not before conſider'd the Queſtion.

I can only ſay in Excuſe for any Errors I may be guilty of, that I have erred (if I have erred) for want of *Judgment*, and not of *Care*. I have long and often and much weighed the Arguments I have offer'd, and the longer the oftner and the more I weigh them, the more I am convinc'd of their Truth.

To enumerate the many ſcandalous Abuſes of the important Truſt repoſed in PATRONS, is an Office too ungrateful to my Temper, and too offenſive to the Perſons concern'd, for me to undertake. To propoſe any Methods for the Regulation of thoſe Abuſes, is what I as little like to do. The former might have the Appearance of ill Nature and ill Manners; the latter, of Vanity and Preſumption. If my Notion be juſt, the Abuſes and the proper Regulation of them, will eaſily be ſeen by thoſe who are willing to ſee them; and as eaſily be regulated by thoſe who are willing to alter their Conduct: The reſt I might ſooner provoke than convince, and inſtead of Converts make Enemies.

But without bringing upon myſelf any diſhonourable Imputations from the Cenſorious, or giving of any Offence

Offence to the Captious, I may desire those *Patrons*, into whose Hands these Papers may chance to fall, seriously and maturely to consider the Subject, as a Matter of very great Consequence to the Welfare of the Society, the Interest of Religion, and the future eternal Happiness of Mankind; and consequently, as a Duty which it highly concerns them to discharge with a *disinterested* Fidelity.

If we view this Point, as it affects the *reasonable Expectations*, I may say *Demands*, of a Number of Men who have cut themselves off from any other Expectations, from any other Provision, from any other Means of Happiness in the Community, common *Honesty* requires *Patrons* to do them *Justice*; common *Compassion* calls for a tender Sense of their hard Fate. To *defraud* them of those Wages which they have earn'd, of those Honours which they have merited by a diligent Employment of their Time and Parts in a Service the most honourable in itself, and the most useful to human Nature, to civil Society, and to Government, is *Injustice* aggravated by *Ingratitude*. To defraud *those* Men of their *Maintenance* and *Reward*, who, when defrauded, are the most *injur'd*, because the most *helpless* Sett of Men in the Commonwealth, is *Injustice* aggravated by *Cruelty*. How movingly, how affectionately does the *Scripture* set forth the Compassion of our CREATOR towards those Servants *whose Wages are kept back* when with Labour and Toil they have reap'd down their Master's Corn! And shall not he hear the Cries, and see the Distresses of many *Clergymen* who have labour'd long and faithfully in *Christ*'s Vineyard, while their Wages are detain'd by those who are appointed to give them their Portion of Meat in due Season and Measure, only to satisfy the *Humour*, or to serve the *Interest* of the *Stewards*; while others, who have been less diligent, if not *all the Day idle*, if not unfaithful to the *Rights* of their Great Master, have a double Portion of Hire, which they sometimes make no better Use of than for an Opportunity to enrich themselves, and to despise their Fellow Servants.

If from *private* Injuries, and *private* Grievances, we turn our Eyes to the Diſhonour and the Damages which the *Publick* ſuſtains by the Abuſe of *Patronage*, the Proſpect grows more melancholy, as the Conſequences ſpread wider; even thro' all Conditions of Life, thro' all Ranks and Orders of Men, up to the Throne itſelf. Whatever may be the Sentiments of *modern Politicians*, it was the Opinion of our wiſer Forefathers, that *Religion* was abſolutely neceſſary to the *preſent*, as well as *future* Proſperity of Mankind, whether in a *ſingle* or *ſocial* Capacity: As one of your Correſpondents intimated, by way of *Introduction* to a Courſe of Papers on the Subject, the Happineſs of human Nature depends upon a regular Obſervance of the *ſeveral* Duties of Religion; the Happineſs of *Society* muſt ariſe from every Member's acting agreeably to the Relation Men ſtand in to one another; and the Belief of the great *Truths* of Religion are a neceſſary Sanction to induce Mankind under all Circumſtances to obſerve thoſe Duties, and to act in Conformity to thoſe Relations; and further, as *Revelation* teacheth all thoſe Duties plainly, and enforces them more ſtrongly, than *unaſſiſted Reaſon* is able of itſelf to do, the Belief of *Chriſtianity* is highly beneficial to human Nature, highly uſeful to human Society. This being the Caſe, what *Axiom* can be plainer than that the Nomination of the moſt learned, pious, upright, diligent, and prudent Men to Preferments in the *Church*, will make a *People* the moſt happy, a *Nation* the moſt flouriſhing, a *Government* the moſt ſecure, becauſe they will be beſt able and the moſt careful to defend *Chriſtianity*, to inculcate its Truths, to explain and enforce its Precepts both by Inſtruction and Example; to teach, to admoniſh, to reprove and exhort with the greateſt Succeſs? Conſequently, thoſe *Patrons* are the beſt Friends to *Mankind*, the trueſt Patriots of their *Country*, and the moſt faithful Subjects to their *King*, who in their Nomination of Perſons to *Eccleſiaſtical* Promotions, have the ſtricteſt Regard to their Abilities as Scholars, and their Qualifications as *Chriſtians*. And what other Method can be ſubſtituted in the room of

of this, ſo effectual towards promoting the Honour of God, and the Advancement of his true Religion, which muſt ever riſe and fall both in Credit and Intereſt with the Characters and Credit of thoſe who are to officiate in religious Offices?

If from *this* World we remove the Scene into the *next*, what before rais'd our *Concern* and *Indignation* muſt ſtrike every ſerious Mind with *Horror*. The Miſchiefs grow infinitely greater, and will be perpetuated to all Eternity. I am writing, it is preſum'd, to *Chriſtians*, who believe that Men muſt be happy or miſerable for ever, as they believe or diſbelieve the Doctrines, as they obſerve or neglect the Duties of *Chriſtianity*; and that their Happineſs and Miſery will be greater or leſs, in Proportion to their Defects and Improvements in *Chriſtian* Perfection. In God's Name then let me aſk any Patron what is the *natural* Way of making People *Good Chriſtians*, but by able and faithful *Paſtors*? Does not the Scripture, does not common Senſe ſuppoſe this, and common Experience prove the Truth of it? Are there not, in conſequence of it, particular Degrees of Happineſs promis'd to ſuch as by their Inſtructions and Example forward the *Salvation* of their People? Are not particular Degrees of Miſery threatned to thoſe through whoſe Neglect they *periſh everlaſtingly*? Are not we all ready enough to object this by way of Blame and Reproach to *bad* Clergymen? But if this be ſo, let any Man, if he can, ſhew me a Reaſon why *Patrons* are not anſwerable, as well as *Paſtors*, for the Lives of the People committed to the *Paſtors* Care. *Paſtors* are intruſted with the Charge of making People *religious*, and *Patrons* are intruſted with the Charge of appointing Perſons *able* and *fit* to do it. Are not *Patrons* then as acceſſory as the *Paſtors* to the Damnation of the People, if they are not careful to make a proper Nomination. And, pray now, what are the Talents and Qualifications which naturally make *able* and *fit* Paſtors? Why ſuch as bear a Relation to the the *Office* of a *Paſtor*; an Aptneſs and Capacity to perform

the *Duties*, and anſwer the *Ends* of it. But as for *political Attachments*, *Affinity*, *Friendſhip*, *private Inclinations* or *Obligations*, I wou'd fain know what Relation theſe Circumſtances, any more than *Stature* or *Shape*, bear to the *Duties* and *Ends* of the *Miniſterial Function*. Will a ſervile Attendance on the Levies of Great Men, a Dexterity in the Management of a Corporation, an active Zeal in the Service of a Knight of the Shire, with the Intemperance, the Noiſe and Tumult uſually accompanying ſuch Buſineſs; will any thing of this Kind encreaſe his Knowledge, or improve his Judgment in Divinity? Will they add any thing to his Piety, give him any one Moral Virtue, any ſingle Accompliſhment, that can make him more uſeful in his Profeſſion? On the contrary, will they not take up too much of his Time and Thoughts; give a wrong Turn to his Paſſions and Affections; fill his Mind with *ſecular* and *worldly* Schemes, when it ought to be employed in the Buſineſs of his Calling, and inflam'd with the Love of God, and an ardent Deſire to ſave his Flock, inſtead of that furious Heat and implacable Hatred which *political Agencies* beget in them? So that what is generally made the GRAND Recommendation to the favour of the *Gentry*, the *Nobility* and *others*, is ſo far from being a real Qualification for any Eccleſiaſtical Preferment, that it naturally unfits and diſqualifies a Man for a conſcientious Diſcharge of his *ſpiritual* Office. And as for the *Merit* of *Friendſhip*, or *Affinity*, I ſhould be glad to be inform'd in what reſpect they make a Man *wiſer* or *better*, or a jot the more qualified to do *God* and *Man* Service in the proper Buſineſs of a *Clergyman*. And if they do not, how can *Patrons* anſwer it to the Truſt repos'd in them, when they promote *Relations*, *Friends* and *Politicians*, not only in preference to others of *ſuperior* Merit, as *Clergymen*, but many times without any competent Share of *real* Merit, or Fitneſs for the Promotion to which they advance them? It may help ſome *Patrons* to apprehend this Matter if they would only, in Imagination, aſſume the *Epiſcopal* Character. For, what-

ever ought to be made the requiſite Qualifications for Orders, ſhould likewiſe determine a *Patron* in his *Nomination.* For, what is *Ordination* but *conſecrating* or *devoting* a Perſon to the Service of God in religious Offices? It is *impowering* and *obliging* him (I ſay *obliging* him, ſince after ſuch *Conſecration* he is not at liberty whether he will attend upon thoſe Offices to which he is *devoted)* to wait at God's Altar, to adminiſter the Sacraments, to preach his Word, and inſtruct People in the Doctrines and Duties of *Chriſtianity.* And what is the *Patron*'s Buſineſs? Nothing elſe but to determine what *particular Clergyman* ſhall exerciſe this Function in ſuch a *particular* Place: And therefore, whatever *qualifies* a Man for *Orders*, ought to *recommend* him to *Preferment*; and whatever *diſqualifies* him, whatever makes him *unfit* to be ordain'd, *diſqualifies* or makes him *unfit* for *Preferment.* So as to *Degrees* of Qualification, if a *Biſhop* were to ordain *one* Perſon only out of *ſeveral* Candidates, who offer'd themſelves for Orders, he ought, without all Peradventure, to give the *Preference* to *him* who ſhou'd appear *beſt* fitted to anſwer the *Ends* of the Miniſterial Office. And ought not the *Patron* to be determined in his Choice by the ſame Reaſons, ſince *he nominates* a Perſon to exerciſe *the very ſame Office*, which the *Biſhop impowers* him to exerciſe: The ſame way of reaſoning holds equally, with reſpect to ſuch as are nominated to the *Government* of *Chriſt*'s Church. And as to any *Dignities*, which are ſuppos'd to be conferr'd as *Rewards*, what are the *Services* for which one is ſuppos'd to be rewarded? His having anſwer'd the *Ends* of his Function, conſequently, he who has done it the moſt *effectually*, deſerves the *greateſt Reward*, the *higheſt Dignities.* Thoſe Ends are the *Intereſt* of *Chriſtianity*, and the *Eternal Salvation* of *Chriſtians*; and therefore, whenever either of thoſe important Points ſuffer, as they certainly muſt, by ſuch Methods of Promotion as are now in Uſe: will the GREAT JUDGE of the whole Earth, at the final Day of Retribution, accept it as a good Plea from a *Patron*, that he had been a long

long time acquainted with ſuch a Clergyman, and cou'd not decently refuſe him; that another had married his Couſin, or ſerv'd *him* or the *Party* at an Election, or that ſome over-bearing great Man recommended him, and therefore that he was bound in Honour or Intereſt to provide for him? Will theſe Reaſons attone for Diſhonour done to *Chriſt*, or the eternal Ruin of thoſe for whom he died? I am not at all ſurpriz'd to ſee *Infidels*, or giddy young Men, given up to *Pleaſure*, or older *Worldlings*, wholly immers'd in *Projects*, and inſenſible of any other Impreſſions, unaffected by ſuch ſolemn, ſuch awful Conſiderations; but when grave and ſerious, and ſeemingly *religious* Perſons, ſacrifice every thing to their preſent Schemes, it gives great Occaſion for Scandal to the Enemy, great Offence to pious and good *Chriſtians*, and is the Cauſe of much *Deiſm*. If I am warmly affected, it is by a Subject that ought warmly to affect every one who is capable of a ſerious Reflection. I acknowledge myſelf to be greatly affected and greatly concern'd, and I heartily wiſh I were capable of infuſing into others the ſame Affections which I feel in my own Breaſt. If I cou'd, I ſhou'd do a greater, a more publick, and a more laſting Service, than by the moſt voluminous Writings. But, it ſeems no good Effect can reaſonably be expected from any Arguments, how plain and how ſtrong ſoever: I remember, once in Converſation with a conſiderable Perſon on this Subject, I was told that writing wou'd be to no purpoſe. If the World be ſo very bad, I am ſorry for it; but it is more than he or any Man upon Earth can tell. Truth, plac'd in a clear Light, will have a *natural Tendency* to convince the Judgment and awaken the Conſcience; and ſometimes the plaineſt Diſcourſes, unadorn'd with the captivating Embelliſhments of Art, will produce unexpected Effects; if not by their own Strength, yet under the aſſiſting Influence of the Divine Spirit, who can ſubdue the ſtrongeſt Prejudices, and ſoften the moſt obdurate Heart. *God's Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs.*

The powerful Efficacy of his Grace is then moſt manifeſted when it makes uſe of the meaneſt Inſtruments; and ſuch an imperfect Performance as mine, if God pleaſes, may have as great an Effect as the moſt artful and elaborate Work. But as we are not anſwerable for *Effects*, we can only uſe the natural Means, and leave the *Event* to Providence. What I have written may, at leaſt, have this good Uſe, *viz.* to occaſion ſome abler Perſon to conſider this *new*, but *important*, Subject more diſtinctly, and to treat it more accurately. If I have laid down any Propoſitions which I cannot make Good, I ſhall readily give them up. If I have been defective in the manner of ſtating or proving any true Propoſition, I ſhall gladly thank any one that will improve it. If any Perſon rejects the whole without Examination, or objects without aſſigning Reaſons, he can merit nothing but Deteſtation or Pity. What I affirm is this, that all *Patronage* is a *Truſt* for which every *Patron* muſt be accountable to *God*. They are *Truſtees* or *Stewards* appointed to give the *Clergy* their *proper Share* of that *Maintenance* and *Reward* which the *Legiſlature* has *appropriated* for *that Purpoſe*; and every Man's *proper Share* is ſuch a *Proportion* as ſhall anſwer to his *Qualifications* and *Services*; his Capacity and Induſtry in anſwering the *Ends* for which the Revenue was appointed; and thoſe Ends muſt be the *Propagation of the Chriſtian Religion*, and the *Eternal Salvation of Chriſtians*. The Deductions which I have made from the *General Notion*, I think are obvious, becauſe manifeſtly tending to anſwer the *main Ends*. Upon theſe Points I reſt the Cauſe. But before I conclude, I muſt enter a Caveat againſt arguing from *diſtant* and *uncertain* Conſequences in anſwer to *preſent* and *certain* Effects. Such Methods as daily beget Ignorance, a decay of Piety, and other Evils of the like Nature, are in themſelves unjuſtifiable; ſuch as have an *apparent natural Tendency* to produce the contrary Effects, ought to be followed without any regard to what may or may not happen, no Body knows when and how. *Patrons* are to be guided in their Choice

Choice by the ſame Rules (as I obſerved before) which guide *Chriſtian Biſhops* in their Acceptance of Perſons *fit* to be *ordain'd*. The proper Qualifications for the one are the proper Recommendations to the other. They muſt be drawn from the *Nature* and *Intention* of their *Office*, and be regulated by the plain Precepts and Directions of the *Scripture*. To prejudice Religion in the *ſeveral Particulars*, and yet pretend to conſult its Intereſt upon the *whole*, is to act very wickedly, and to talk very weakly; ſeldom proceeds from an upright Heart, and never can anſwer the pretended Purpoſes. It is departing from the *Simplicity* and *Godly Sincerity* preſcrib'd and practis'd by *Chriſt*, and cutting out crooked ſerpentine Paths for their own Pleaſure or Intereſt. It is ſhutting *Providence* out of the World, and undertaking to govern it better by the Maxims of *human Policy*.

GENEROSUS.

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